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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

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WORKERS MARCH AGAINST HAITIAN BOSSES' BUDGET

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, September 18—As growing demonstrations against the anti-worker national budget entered their third week, class struggle here is intensifying. A general strike was called by transport workers, followed by two more days of demonstrations. From the capital to the provinces, up to 10,000 people have angrily taken to the streets to protest outrageous attacks on the working class, including a flat tax of US$186 for access to public administration services and an annual renter's tax of six to 10 percent. For example, an individual in a home worth US$3226 would pay US$326/year. The bosses' budget includes more money for the functioning of Parliament and the executive branch than for education and health.

According to Radio Kiskeya, the strike was 95 percent successful around the capital. It was also widely respected in St-Marc, Petit Goave, Les Cayes, and Hinche, all large population centers. Union leaders are calling this a warning strike. If the government persists in going forward with the budget, more actions are planned.

Encouraged by the showmanship of one senator who tore up the budget on the floor of the Senate, the protests began with hundreds taking to the streets. But while a dogfight has surfaced among politicians in Parliament, it will not put an end to capitalist exploitation. Only conscious class struggle can lead to communist revolution and crush capitalism. Workers are voting with their feet for a mass demonstration to organize even more people against the government. Many called for more than tearing up or burning the budget, but for revolution as the only way to address the needs of the workers and students of Haiti.

The bosses and their police are trying to suppress these demonstrations because they threaten the stability of what is locally called the "restavek" bourgeoisie. (Restaveks are children of the poorest sectors of the working class, bought by the wealthy as domestic slaves). The police have answered the protestors with live bullets and tear gas. Several people have been wounded, and the gas has permeated workers' homes.

In Port-au-Prince, the demonstrations snaked through the city, into middle-class neighborhoods like Pétionville, home to store owners whose products are often unobtainable by workers, and up to Pélerin, where President Jovenel Moïse lives. The police have been particularly brutal as they protect the private property of the rich.

Students from the State University and others gathered in front of the Faculty of Ethnology at the Universite d'Etat d'Haiti. They raised money to rent a sound system and buy materials for placards. Claiming the street, artists among the militants sang revolutionary songs denouncing the bourgeoisie and the State in an event called "Concert tear up, burn the budget." The crowd took up the call and added its own verses, such as "Tear up, burn down the Parliament." After each verse, different people took the microphone to encourage more people to join the fight. A Progressive Labor Party (PLP) member set the tone by calling for class struggle to fight the bosses to the end: "We will not be asked to pay for what should be our rights. It is necessary to revolt against the bourgeois system, which dreams only of more exploitation of the masses." Every time a journalist tried to question the PLPer, he replied by shaking his sign: "This budget is a conspiracy of the State and the bourgeoisie against the masses."

In one provincial town, up to a thousand people—practically the entire population—blocked the streets as they joined the popular movement, responding to the call of PLP to fight back against the bosses.

PLers are intent on giving a different kind of political leadership to these mobilizations. At the end of a Port-au-Prince concert, the crowd took off shouting, "Where are we going? To Parliament to tear up and burn the criminal, anti-people budget." The PLers called for "anti-capitalist revolution." Many in the crowd, which grew in strength as it marched through the streets, took up this chant as well. Arriving at Parliament, the group denounced the bourgeois politicians and their capitalist bosses for several hours, threatening to invade and burn down Parliament. The police assigned to protect the government were ineffective at containing this angry group.

The struggle in Haiti must continue on the basis of class struggle, not by favoring political or parliamentary leaders who seek mass support for the rulers' elections. Taxi drivers, workers, street merchants—the majority of people we met agreed with this fight. Class struggle grows daily in Haiti. The masses increasingly understand their situation and the exploitation they are facing. The working class here is strengthening by the day.

Our Party must step up to lead and expose the misleaders, be they bourgeois shills, reactionary nationalists, or fake leftists who espouse reform and elections over communist revolution. It is our job to win the hearts and minds of workers, students, and soldiers. It is our responsibility to organize them into a fighting force to destroy the capitalist system and all that it stands for: exploitation, racism, sexism, national borders, imperialist war. It is our imperative to build a new society, communism, based on equality, where workers rule in our own interest.✪

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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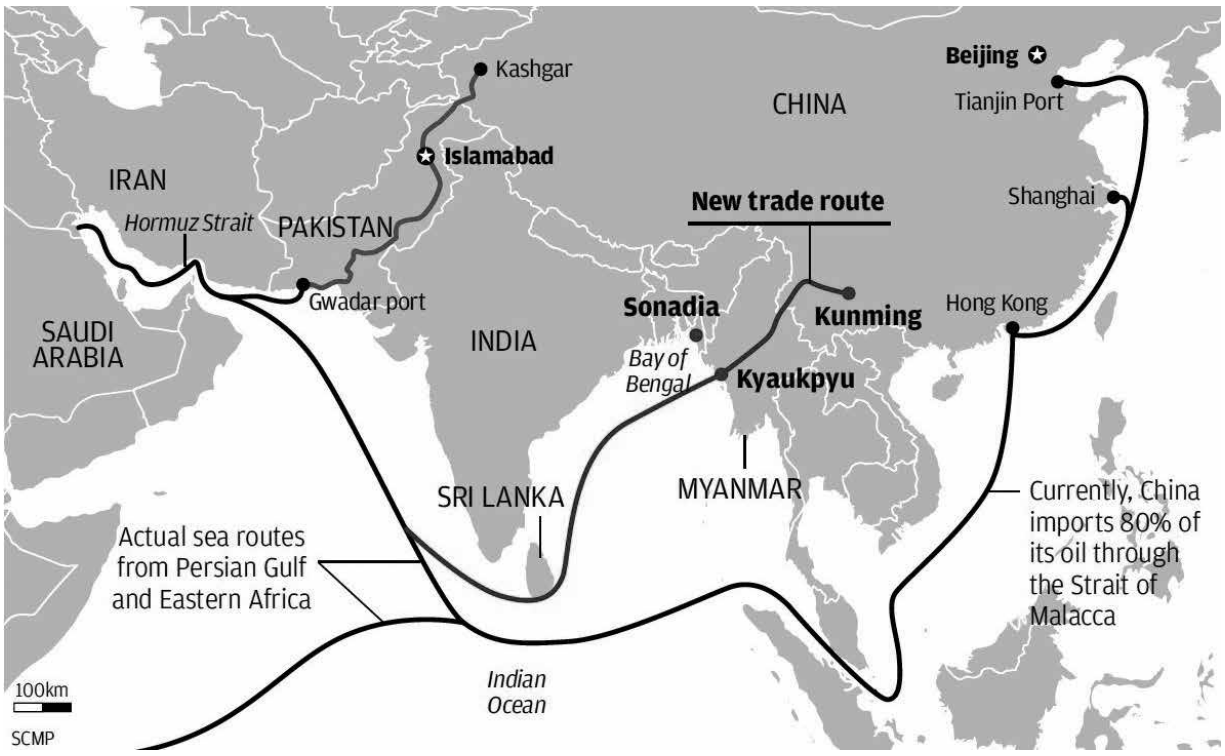
Editorial

Rohingya Crisis: U.S.-China Proxy War



As the Myanmar military continues its genocidal onslaught—murdering children, raping women, torching whole villages—against the Rohingya people, the U.S. rulers' media have focused on religious differences in this small country in Southeast Asia. In reality, the mass atrocities and displacement in Myanmar are products of capitalist greed and inter-imperialist rivalry. U.S., Chinese, and local bosses are vying for control over rich reserves of oil and natural gas in Rakhine state, the Rohingyas' home. Even more critically, U.S. bosses are exploiting the plight of Myanmar's Muslim minority in a desperate effort to check China's rise as the dominant power in Asia—and beyond.

China's "Malacca Dilemma"

China's ambitious One Belt One Road (also known as the New Silk Road) aims to control Eurasia and East Africa through a land- and sea-based trading network. This multi-trillion-dollar project would create roads, ports, and railroads through Central and South Asia, enhancing China's access to Middle Eastern and European markets (see CHALLENGE, 3/9/16).

One of six OBOR corridors would connect China to India via Myanmar and Bangladesh. Moreover, Myanmar is "a vital cog in China's strategy…to avoid its Malacca dilemma" (Huffington Post, 9/23). At present, 25 percent of the world's oil—and most of China's energy supply—is transported through the Malacca Strait, a chokepoint between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

To reduce their vulnerability, guarantee that oil imports from Saudi Arabia flow freely, and strengthen their military foothold in the region, the Chinese bosses established the $10 billion Sino-Myanmar pipeline, connecting the Bay of Bengal to China's landlocked Yunnan province (Stratfor, 9/14). China is also building a deep-water port in Rakhine at Kyaukphyu, which "will give China highly prized access to the Indian Ocean" (New York Times, 7/20) and is "expected to contribute huge profits to Chinese business conglomerates such as Citic Group" (Huffington Post, 9/23).

As U.S. President Donald Trump neglects to follow up Barack Obama's overtures to the newly "democratic" Myanmar, now led by genocide apologist (and Nobel Peace Prize winner) Aung San Suu Kyi, China is exerting more power in its backyard:

> *Across Southeast Asia, China is energetically bringing nations into its orbit, wooing American friends and allies with military hardware, infrastructure deals and diplomatic attention…Once completed, 'Kyaukpyu will be a Chinese naval base,' said Mr. Maung Aung Myoe, the military analyst. 'China desperately needs access on the eastern side of the Indian Ocean.' China is already building Indian Ocean ports in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and it is seeking approval for one in Bangladesh (NYT, 7/20).*

Instability in Rakhine is a problem for Chinese imperialists:

> *China has a particular interest in pressing the Arakan rebels to the peace table.…Keeping Rakhine free of unrest may have also been a factor in China's blocking the United Nations from issuing a statement on the allegations of atrocities committed by Myanmar's army there (NYT, 7/20).*

But for U.S. imperialists, ethnic cleansing in Rakhine could be a pretext for potential military intervention in the region. Under the smokescreen of "human rights," the U.S. hopes to destabilize Myanmar and thwart China's looming regional supremacy: "[T]he generals at the Pentagon see the [Myanmar corridor] as an enemy supply line. With the U.S. flexing its military muscle in the South China Sea…. [p]lacing Rakhine state under US/NATO protection would be an obvious way to sabotage this project" (Global Research, 9/15).

This is why the Rohingya crisis is getting so much media attention in the West. While the U.S. imperialists ignore the killing of Yemeni workers by their oil-soaked allies in Saudi Arabia, they cry crocodile tears for the Rohingya. The criminal wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria should teach us to be wary whenever the mass-murdering U.S. bosses voice their concern.

Myanmar: This is What Capitalism Looks Like

With a poverty rate of 37.5 percent, Myanmar is one of the poorest countries in Asia; in Rakhine, the poverty rate is 78 percent (CFR, 9/13). The country has the lowest life expectancy in Southeast Asia and the second highest rate of infant and child mortality (World Bank, 2014).

To keep workers from organizing to overthrow this failed capitalist system, the bosses drown them in religion and nationalism. In Myanmar, Buddhists represent 87 percent of the population. Buddhist rulers have persecuted the mostly Muslim Rohingya people for centuries. Since the military takeover in 1962, the government has excluded the Rohingyas from citizenship. They need official permission to marry and have

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Church Art Imitates Class Struggle

Deportation & Police Killings, Same Fight vs. Capitalist Terror

NEW YORK CITY, September 27—Over forty people attended from the different congregations where Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have a base gathered for a revival. We sang songs that called for justice, including the song, "Go Down Moses," which a comrade rewrote to reflect our anti-racism politics. Some also sang "Ballad of the Deportees" to help inspire our antiracist struggles against deportations and murder by police.

Mobilize vs. Deportation

One NYC congregation holds New Sanctuary meetings and support a Guatemalan family who found refuge in the Holyrood Episcopal Church in Washington Heights after Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) targeted the mother for deportation. As of now, ICE agents (modern minutemen) cannot arrest their targets at churches, schools or hospitals.

At another church, people are mobilizing support for a member who is facing a deportation hearing herself at the end of October. She was brought here legally from the Dominican Republic at the age of seven. She suffered such racist oppression that she fell into substance abuse and was forced into a plea bargain for drug dealing for which she was no way guilty. Subsequently pardoned for this "crime", she was on the road to naturalization when, late for work, she jumped a subway turnstile. Now ICE is using this minor infraction to try to deport her. This outrage began under Deporter-in-Chief Obama.

The real criminal is the United States government that a) creates atrocious conditions forcing people to flee past these fake borders, b) makes life insufferably racist and sexist once workers reach the U.S., and c) exploit them under the threat of deportation while also using them as a scapegoat and discipline the rest of the working class into submission.

Targets of Police Murder

When the capitalist government isn't out hunting and capturing our class, they are straight up killing us in our homes. Workers are also sharpening the struggle for justice for Muhammed Bah and Debra Danner, two emotionally disturbed targets of police murder in NYC. The fight against racist police murder is a priority.

Bah was a 28-year-old cab driver from Guinea who was shot by the cops when his mother called 911 for an ambulance. One kkkop straddled Bah who was lying on the floor still breathing and executed him with a final shot to the head. He was murdered in the hands of the capitalist government on September 25, 2012.

For five years an expanding coalition of religious people and community fighters have supported Ms. Bah in her quest for justice. Repeatedly, rebuffed by the Manhattan District Attorney and federal prosecutor, all that remains is a civil lawsuit and the hope that evidence of the crime and cover-up will finally come to light.

Deborah Danner, a 66-year-old woman, is now part of a harrowing group of Black workers whose mental illness prompted fatal police violence, instead of medical services. When her neighbors called 911 saying she was acting erratically. In response, Bronx police sergeant Hugh Barry shot and killed her in her apartment. They did not wait for psychiatrically trained clinicians. They did not first try to de-escalate or calm her down. She was murdered by the state on October 18, 2016.

Both Mayor Bill de Blasio and Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill were forced to admit that this was unjustified. "Hugh Barry…was charged with second-degree murder, first- and second-degree manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide, and was suspended without pay" (NYT, 5/31).

The history of these prosecutions is predictably dismal! Members of the congregation are working to build a citywide struggle to covinct cops and to substitute in trained civilian responders to such crisis events rather than the intimidating killers the bosses have created in their police forces. Communists raised chants like "Trump, O'Neil, DeBlasio, this racist system's got to go" to show how the whole system is rotten to the core.

Art for Class Struggle

During the revival, there was an interactive skit about police harassment. The audience was invited to offer different solutions to this racist violence. People became more confident about church people's responsiveness to antiracist, pro-communist politics.

Most of the members in this small, multiracial congregation support the fightback. Although many are reluctant to become actively involved themselves. It is an ongoing struggle with friends about the critical need to expand the fightback for survival itself. The overriding goal is to crush this racist-sexist-imperialist ruling class, and replace it with egalitarian workers' control worldwide.

Communists in the congregation said the Christians' first community in Jerusalem was based on communist principles: "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claims that any of their possessions was their own but they shared everything they had... there were no needy persons among them" (Acts 4:31ff). Inspiring!✪

Howard Students Shut Down Former FBI Director Comey

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 22—The Howard University bosses felt pain from their ill-advised decision to invite former FBI Director James Comey to be the featured speaker at the University's opening Convocation. Over 20 students organized as "HU Resist" inflicted that pain. They marched into the auditorium just before Comey was to speak singing the old protest song, "We Shall Not Be moved."

The protesters then chanted, "Get out James Comey! You're not our homie!" and "No justice, no peace, no f***ing police!" They read a list of Black members of the working class killed by the police.

Comey tried to speak but could not be heard over the chanting and finally sat down. The protesters marched out to join a bigger rally outside the auditorium. They rallied on the Yard (the main campus), growing in numbers.

> *The…students issued a statement saying Comey "represents an institution diametrically opposed to the interests of black people domestically and abroad. While his tenure at the FBI has finished, his impact on our community remains."*
>
> *In particular, they faulted him with propagating what some officials have called "the Ferguson effect" — a theory that the rise in violent crime is due to police being fearful of facing public criticism for being too violent, and therefore avoiding confrontations with criminals (Washington Post, 9/22).*

The Ferguson effect is racist, unproven, and coined by the recently retired chief of the St. Louis police department, Doyle Sam Dotson III. This racist theory was used by Rahm Emanuel, mayor of Chicago, Chuck Rosenberg, director of the Drug

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Mexico Earthquakes

Destruction Uncovers Workers' Solidarity & Govt's Atrocity

The earthquake on September 19 killed at least 333 people in Central Mexico, injured thousands of others, and displaced thousands more. Hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed or damaged so severely as to be uninhabitable. Mexico City has been devastated, but the states of Morelos and Puebla were particularly hit. Overnight, cities have become ruins.

In wake of this catastrophe, workers look to themselves to rescue and provide basic resources. Much like the 1985 earthquake exactly 32 years ago, the capitalist government exposed themselves to be the opportunist profit-driven leeches they are.

Relying on the Working Class

The working class mobilized moments after the earthquake. Some hurled donations of food and water, shovels, and ready to dig people out of the rubble. The Guardian reports:

> *By the following day, ordinary Mexicans had created a vast recovery operation to fill every imaginable gap in the official response. Donation sites were set up to receive, organise and deliver essential supplies of food, water, medicines, bedding, clothes and tools to rescue sites and shelters. In many cases, search and rescue operations continued throughout the night thanks to lamps, batteries and petrol donated by members of the public.*
>
> *The huge army of volunteers established spontaneous networks, using cars, trucks, motorcycles and bikes to access even the most isolated zones not yet reached by authorities. Engineers, doctors, vets, therapists, couriers and cooks contributed specialist skills and equipment. Taco vendors donated food to rescuers (9/23).*

It is in time of crisis we see the naked face of the two opposing classes under capitalism. For the working class, our instinct and interest lies in collectivity and laboring to meet the needs of those around us, as evident in the aftermath of the earthquake. This working-class leadership is the kernel of a dictatorship of the proletariat.

This collectivity flies in the face of one of the ruling-class biggest lies: selfishness of human nature. "Bosses believe human instinct is capitalistic, that every one is born selfish, and that nature determines wealth and poverty. The bosses pretend "human nature" can't change. They really mean that workers will endure capitalism forever. These ideas are false and vile" (Road to Revolution IV, PLP's Communist Manifesto).

Workers with class-consciousness who soar against the bosses' divisions of racism and sexism make the bosses tremble in fear. For the ruling class, their instinct is to exploit, compete, and make money. This essence of inequality has been systemized and guaranteed by what is the capitalist government.

Workers See Through the Capitalist State

The illusion of democracy has a weaker hold on the working class in Mexico. It is election season and many know politicians are looking at this mass suffering as an opportunity to advance their careers.

When President Enrique Peña Nieto toured a damaged town in his home state, students booed him. Much of the disaster response was concentrated in rich areas. "Other grievances with local officials predate the earthquake—the rutted road into town, poor water service and too many unkept campaign promises—but the earthquake brought such frustrations to a head" (The Guardian, 9/27).

President Neito promised funds for rebuilding but history shows government aid is usually diverted to groups in bed with the politicians and their capitalist parties, as was the case after the twin hurricanes in Mexico's Pacific and Gulf Coasts in 2013.

" 'They are withholding the food and donations, hoarding them, so they can get a picture of themselves giving out food,' Rosalino López, 36, a taxi driver said. 'Promoting their image, that's all they want and care about'" (The Guardian, 9/27)

Some victims were directed to show their voter-registration ID in exchange for supplies.

Many remember the 1985 earthquake when thousands died and the rest were left to fend for themselves.

Anger surged against the military. "'The army has a history of imposing brutal triage rules for natural disasters which dates back to the 1985 earthquake,' said public policy analyst Rodolfo Soriano Nuñez" (The Guardian, 9/21). The distrust is rightly due. In some neighborhoods, armed forces have taken over the rescue operations initiated by civilians and razed buildings that still have people trapped inside.

Part of the government's worry is how this working-class solidarity can turn into working-class resistance against the government. The bosses are right to be scared.

International Solidarity

When the working class in Mexico organized relief efforts after the earthquakes, they were giving leadership to workers everywhere. We should follow suit. Much of Mexican immigrant families in New York City come from Puebla and surely many have families affected. Some community organizations, that Progressive Labor Party members are part of, are participating in sending supplies to affected areas. It is our responsibility to get out there in the mass organizations—schools, community groups, unions, and hospitals—to organize a solidarity campaign. This includes investigating which members in our organizations are affected, who can link us to fighters in Mexico, and raise money and pro-communist politics about state power.

If the Haiti earthquake of 2010 is any indication, recovery in Mexico means deplorable conditions and stronger military presence. Stand in solidarity with the working class in Mexico. Organize without borders!✪

Rohingya Crisis: U.S.-China Proxy

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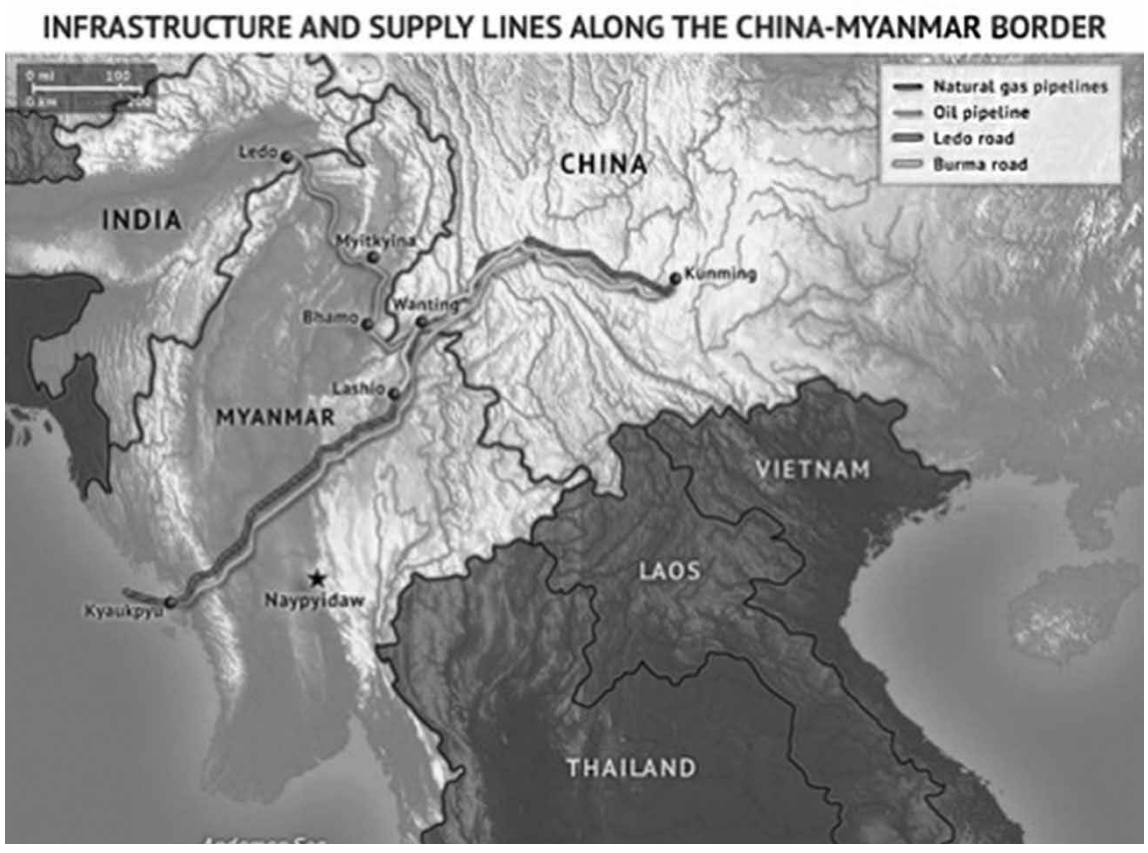
limited access to education, jobs, and residency. In some parts of the country they can only have two children (CFR, 9/13). These restrictions resemble the racist laws imposed by the Nazis against Jewish people in Germany.

Attempts by the Rohingya people to fight back have met with little success, due both to their limited numbers and weak political line. The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), funded by bosses in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (International Crisis Group 12/15/16), is driven by nationalist politics. After ARSA's recent attacks on government buildings, the ruthless Myanmar government responded by killing thousands and forcing nearly half a million (including 240,000 children) to leave the country. Aung San Suu Kyi defends these atrocities under the guise of "national security."

Meanwhile, her administration acknowledged that it will manage the redevelopment of the razed villages, a potential goldmine for local capitalists. The government plan "is likely to raise concern about prospects for the return of the 480,000 refugees, and compound fears of ethnic cleansing" (Reuters, 9/27).

Long Fight Ahead

There are many lessons to be learned from the tragic developments in Myanmar. One in particular is the role played by the big imperialists in a seemingly "internal" affair. Whenever the bosses' media pay close attention to crimes against workers, a little digging will reveal the rulers' economic and political interests—which are never to serve the working class. Only a communist revolution, led by Progressive Labor Party, can smash the murderous profit system and end racist genocide for all time. Join us!✪



HU Students Shut Down FBI Comey

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Enforcement Administration, and of course James Comey. The Ferguson effect more reflects the trepidation of kkkops following the Ferguson rebellion. That's a good thing. It shows how threatened the rulers feel of the possibility of class-conscious Black workers armed in rebellion. That idea that this resulted in an increase of violent crimes is how the rulers' way to warrant an increase of police in the neighborhoods, part fascism, and all racism. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) stands in solidarity with Howard students for calling out the system's racism.

The students then marched to the administration building to confront the President Wayne A.I. Frederick. Cowering in his office, he ordered the building locked down, and finally re-opened it two hours later after the rally ended.

HU Resist first stepped into the spotlight last semester as they protested the secret, on-campus meeting of President Frederick with the racist billionaire Betsy DeVos, Donald Trump's Secretary of Education. Several of the antiracist fighters also traveled to Charlottesville in August to confront the Nazis who rallied there (see CHALLENGE, 9/13).

Fight Elitism, Build Working-Class Consciousness

HU Resist is fighting back against elitism at the University; one HU Resist member declared, "Howard is doing exactly what it was designed to do: to be an institution for the future of the black elite." HU Resist wants to demolish this type of culture and replace it with one of responsibility and empathy with the surrounding community. Unifying with working class communities throughout the Washington area is a great idea as the next step in the struggle.

The PLP calls on HU Resist to link up with the Washington area transit workers, who have their own militant history and are under sharp attack from management bosses. The future of a worker-student alliance against racism and capitalism is bright. Such an alliance can intensify the class struggle in all its dimensions and move our struggle closer to revolution and victory!✪

Who Is Comey?

James B. Comey is best known for his October Surprise, an October 28 letter to Congress, essentially reopening a closed investigation of Clinton and her aids, which allegedly damaged Clinton's chances of winning the presidency (CHALLENGE, 1/11).

But, Comey's entire career has been a part of the (in)justice system of the United States that is responsible both for mass incarceration and vicious imperialism abroad. He is part and parcel of the ruling class's ongoing attack on the global working class, including racist and international aggression and torture—par for the course for capitalism.

As Deputy Attorney General in 2005, he signed a memo in 2005 approving 13 forms of CIA torture during interrogation including waterboarding, wall slams, sexual humiliation, confinement in small boxes, subjection to extreme temperatures and stress positions, extreme sleep deprivation, and other forms of torture.

As FBI Director, he justified mass incarceration in a speech given in 2015. He also doubled the reward to $2 million for the capture of Black nationalist Assata Shakur, who has political asylum in Cuba. He led the charge to get Apple Inc. to install a "back door" for U.S. surveillance agencies to use, declaring at a cybersecurity conference in 2016, "There is no such thing as absolute privacy in America; there is no place outside of judicial reach." (CNN 3/9/16).

He left the Department of (in)Justice in 2005 to work as general counsel for Lockheed Martin, the largest defense contractor in the U.S. and a key part of the US imperialist infrastructure. Five years later, he joined senior management person at Bridgewater Associates, a major investment firm, and then in 2013 joined the board of HSBC Holding, a major finance company that was in big legal trouble over money laundering for drug dealers and alleged terrorists.

"Comey led FBI surveillance of Black Lives Matter activists and leaders while directing the agency. Comey is set to lead a lecture series at Howard University this year" (BET, 9/23).

Like the City University of New York students did to war criminal David Petraeus in 2013, the Howard students have an opportunity to make Comey's visit a memorable one.

Why at Howard?

Why, did Howard University invite him to launch this academic year at Convocation? Probably to demonstrate HU's commitment to the existing capitalist order including some of its most heinous aspects. But here is what racist university President Frederick wrote to the campus community prior to the event:

"I am pleased to welcome Mr. James Comey to deliver the 150th Opening Convocation address... He will enlighten us and share with us his experiences and his expertise. Formerly the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), appointed by President Barack Obama, Mr. Comey is a man steeped in his ethics."

If Comey is "steeped in his ethics", we are facing a poisonous cup of tea.

Anti-Racist Rebels Rock St. Louis Bosses

It's barely three years since racist killer cop Darren Wilson murdered teenager Mike Brown in cold blood, in the streets of Ferguson. Now workers in the St. Louis area, and all over the world, have witnessed kkkop Jason Stockley get acquitted for the racist murder of 24-year-old unarmed Black father Anthony Lamar Smith. The international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) stands in working-class solidarity with the anti-racist fighters of St Louis, with the revolutionary message that justice for victims of fascist police terror will only be gained by smashing this racist and sexist capitalist system worldwide.

The Working Class Will Always Fight Back

Prior to announcing the verdict on September 15, that cleared Stockley for the 2011 murder of Anthony Lamar Smith, the bosses were already preparing for a working-class rebellion. They built barricades around the courthouse and increased their police presence. They were determined not to let workers take the offensive as they had before in cities like Ferguson, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, and Minneapolis. The sight of mass multiracial fightback terrifies the bosses everywhere, and rightfully so. Revolutionary working class unity threatens their very own parasitic existence.

But despite the bosses' efforts, workers throughout the area have risen in rebellion to honor of their murdered working-class brother. Since Stockley's acquittal, anti-racist fighters have taken to the streets day and night to condemn and fight back against this racist profit system. At least 100 fighters have been arrested so far, as the bosses' attack dogs brutalize them with military-grade weapons, tear gas, and pepper spray.

Regardless of the violence that they face, workers in St. Louis continue fighting back, being a beacon of anti-racism for workers everywhere. They provide a glimpse of the potential for revolutionary change possible only when the working masses organize long-term in their class interests to fight for and build a better world.

Destroy Bosses' Government – Fight For Working Class Power

Make no mistake: the institutions of the police and the courts exist, and have always existed, to protect and enforce the rights of private property of the capitalist class and their ability to continue making profit through the division, terrorization, and exploitation of the working-class. 'Reform' makes the kkkops and courts look nicer, but they continue to serve their capitalist masters. A world without racism and sexism means communism, when workers run all aspects of society.

The bosses' need for increasing police state fascism in the streets is connected to their need to boost their military budget for their imperialist oil wars worldwide. The countless attacks on workers, from deportations to racist police murder, from sex trafficking to mass incarceration, all need to be recognized as problems of capitalism and destroyed through communist revolution.

Organizing the international working class into a mass Progressive Labor Party of millions remains the only way to permanently abolish the cops, courts, jails, or any other oppressive state institution. Only by organizing our class to destroy inequality, racism, and sexism at their capitalist root can we ever hope to achieve justice for Anthony Lamar Smith and countless others. Only by establishing a worker-run egalitarian communist society in which we make all decisions based on our needs not on making profits, can we ever expect racist police murders to be a nightmare of the past. Join the Progressive Labor Party and build this fight now.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Hurricane Harvey: No Support from Authorities

On Thursday, August 17, Hurricane Harvey began its furious attack that lasted until the third of September. It's heart-wrenching here. We thought we would receive the necessary support from the proper authorities and the volunteer organizations, but sadly, that's not the case at the moment.

At this time, the people affected by this disaster are not being supported. Many are undocumented workers who, for fear of being deported are not asking for assistance and live in an inhumane condition caused by the capitalist state.

Members of PLP have to give support and solidarity to the victims of the hurricane in a way that is characteristic of our international communist party. We have a fight to carry on at this time. We won't allow the disgraceful corruption of profiteering influence our actions, like the capitalists. No worker is worth more—documented or undocumented. We need to unite forces as a class to keep moving forward and remember that we aren't alone in the struggle.

★★★★★

Trump fiddles with North Korea while Puerto Rico Drowns

Hurricane Maria left Puerto Rico (PR) with zero electricity or running water for almost 3.7 million people, mainly members of our own class. In English Puerto Rico means "Rich Port," but rich for whom? The main problem is there is no forthcoming help. President Donald Trump fiddles with North Korea while PR drowns in floodwaters with millions of homes wiped out, and tens of thousands facing death from dehydration, starvation, or exposure.

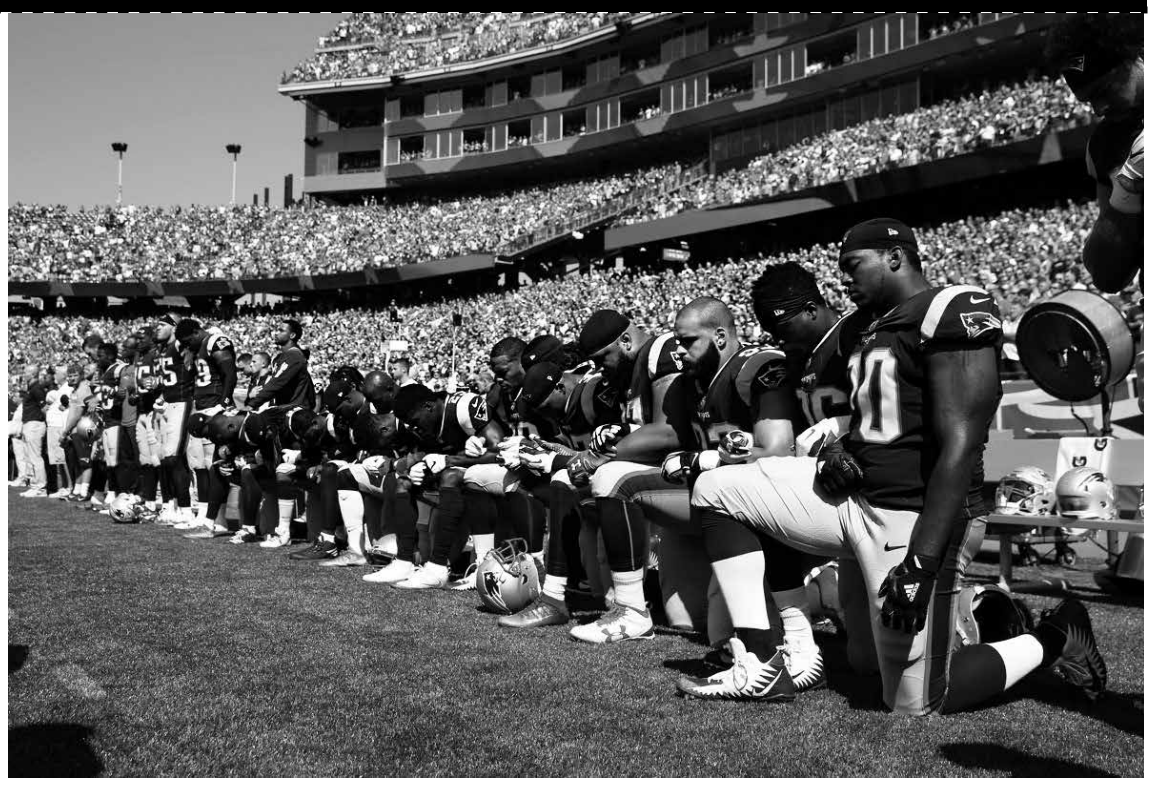
Hundreds, if not thousands, of U.S. and other ships and planes could deliver food, fresh water, and generators for electricity during the months-long process of restoring the power lines for electricity and running water. All eleven nuclear aircraft carriers and dozens of nuclear submarines from the U.S. arsenal, all run by nuclear reactors, could provide the electricity needed to run electrical necessities. But capitalism and its fake borders prevent one area working with another area. If the U.S. were to send resources to PR, it would be out of their imperialist interest, not the goodness of their heart.

Instead Trump is threatening North Korea with destruction, meaning murdering over 25 million people, again mainly members of the working class. The capitalist regime of North Korea knows that if it cannot maintain a credible threat against the U.S. ruling class. Its location is at a precarious place that puts them at a flashpoint of U.S.-China rivalry. The claim that they are a danger, rather than acting in self-preservation, is a deliberate lie to justify this threatened destruction in the eyes of workers around the world.

But is the neglect of the desperate life-threatening situation of millions of residents of PR—a U.S. "possession" since the 1898 war against Spain—any less an atrocity than the deliberately threatened destruction of millions North Koreans?

And compounding this atrocity, Trump denies global warming. While the rapid sequence of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose, and Maria may not necessarily be repeated every year, the likelihood is rapidly growing that such sequences will occur more frequently. The trend will continue; warmer oceans produce hurricane-friendly conditions. The warming of the waters is now mainly due to the burning of oil, coal, and natural gas (the fossil fuels). Again, capitalism is to blame.

Workers must rid the world of profit-mad capitalism that spawns such atrocities. Join PLP to bring that day closer to reality.



Last year, Colin Kaepernick, sat and kneeled against racism during the national anthem. "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of colour," he said.

On September 22, Trump said in a speech, ""Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that [epithet] off the field right now. Out. He's fired. He's fired!'"

In response, on Sunday when most NFL games are played, some teams took knees during the anthem together. Some stayed in the locker room.

Sports can be an area for antiracist politics. The national anthem's composer Francis Scott Key was a notorious pro-slavery racist. No allegiance to a country founded on racism!

★★★★★

Tribute to Lenny at Delegate Assembly

At the Delegate Assembly of my union (Professional Staff Congress), more than hundred delegates paid tribute to Lenny Dick, a math professor, union activist, antiracist and life-long communist.

In honor of Lenny, delegates pledged to join the campus rally at Bronx Community College (where he taught) on November 30, kicking off a contract campaign that will, among other demands, fight to win a living wage ($7,000 per course) for adjunct professors, whose interests Lenny had always promoted.

One delegate said Lenny fought for a class-conscious trade unionism that challenged our class enemies. Currently, the Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees case, which the Supreme Court will hear in October, threatens public workers. The Court will likely rule against the unions, this will weaken them. People in the bargaining unit who benefit from union contracts won't have to pay a penny in either dues or a "fair-share" fee. The conservative National Right to Work Committee and the Liberty Justice Center brought this case. Both organizations are heavily funded by the billionaire Koch brothers. In her book *Dark Money*, author Jane Mayer describes how the Janus case is part of a long-term project by the Koch brothers and other billionaires to weaken government unions, slash public spending and reduce taxes on capitalists like themselves.

Lenny believed in a labor movement that would have brought thousands of NYC public workers to demonstrate at 740 Park Avenue, the luxury apartment building where David Koch lives. He believed in a labor movement that would be organizing millions of public workers to walk off the job the day the Supreme Court heard the case. This is in stark contrast to the leaders of the public unions who have stuck their heads in the sand and done nothing.

Lenny also believed in a labor movement that would refuse to accept capitalism. Capitalism is a society in which a handful of tycoons amass unparalleled fortunes and political power, while 20 percent of New Yorkers are poor, tens of thousands are homeless and millions more worry every month whether or not they'll be able to pay their bills.

Lenny is gone, but his dream of an egalitarian, communist society lives on.

★★★★★

Cuba: Hurricane Response Is a Political Question

The ability of a society to respond to natural disasters is primarily a political question. Communism is the exact opposite of the hopeless self-serving mantras of modern capitalism. While Cuba has long ago given up socialism in favor of becoming the next vacation hot spot, the ideology and practices have hung on to some degree, both in the state's priorities and the outlook of the people.

Cuba's reaction to Hurricane Irma gives us a fading look at what has been lost as the communist movement has declined over the last 50 years as well as a small glimmer at what is possible in a society fully dedicated to serving the needs of the great masses of people.

Hurricane Response After the Socialist Revolution

Shortly after the socialist revolution in 1960, Cuba developed a sophisticated hurricane response system in the wake of Hurricane Flora, a 1963 storm that killed 1,750 people in Cuba. The system included standing evacuation plans for every household and frequent drills. The whole preparation and response to hurricanes was organized under a civil defense system that organized people throughout the island to participate in the readiness, evacuations and immediate response. The Civil defense system has hung on, at least for now, even as socialism has been abandoned by the Cuban rulers.

> *[T]hey save enormous numbers of lives by massive evacuations. … this time they evacuated a million people. And even though the infrastructure is poor and many of the houses are very poor, [the state's] focus is on saving lives.*
>
> *…[the civil defense organizations] have all the neighborhoods mapped. They know exactly who lives where. They know who the vulnerable people are, and they know who the elderly people are and where they live. And a couple of days before the hurricane hits, they evacuate them all. They start with those people. Pregnant women get put in hospitals. People with infirmities get also put in hospitals. Others get taken to either shelters or with family or friends who are living in more secure houses. But everybody in Cuba knows what they're going to do if a hurricane hits." (*Democracy Now, *9/22).*

Cuba's reaction to Hurricane Irma gives us a fading look at what has been lost as well as a small glimmer at what is possible

Compare what happened in Cuba, where 10 lives were lost in one of the places hardest hit by Irma to the situation in Florida where 11 people died at a single site as a result of the failure of the nursing home administration and State authorities to evacuate the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills. After Hurricane Irma knocked out their power "residents …spent three days sweltering in stiflingly hot rooms despite the fact that a fully functioning and air-conditioned hospital is right across the street"(NBC 9/21).

Perhaps even more sickening than the complete abdication of responsibility by those in-charge of the care of the nursing home patients is how the profit system makes an honest evaluation of what went wrong in Hollywood Hills impossible to assess as the finger pointing has begun.

> *A critical issue—whether administrators from the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills in Broward County made distress calls for help to Gov. Rick Scott's private cellphone — will probably not be cleared up soon. On Sunday, the Florida governor's office revealed the four key voice mails from the center have been deleted…*
>
> *The center's administrators maintain the calls to Scott were seeking "immediate assistance." Scott's office, however, says the calls never indicated an emergency, and that the information was passed on to the appropriate state agencies. But now the voice mails are gone (Washington Post 9/25).*

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Who wrote U.S. national anthem? A pro-slavery white supremacist

NYT, 9/25 — …The anthem was authored by a white supremacist, Francis Scott Key,…a proponent of African colonization — exporting free blacks back to Africa — and an opponent of the anti-slavery movement….

…The Colonial Marines, a mostly black unit composed primarily of runaway slaves who fought for the British during the War of 1812, on the promise of attaining their freedom….humiliated Key's own unit in battle. Jason Johnson, a professor of political science at Morgan State University…wrote:…Key "was about as pro-slavery, anti-black and anti-abolitionist as you could get at the time."

Bosses' laws excluded Black, Latin workers from government benefits

NYT, 8/13 — …Today's socio-economic order — the minimum wage…Social Security and even the G.I. Bill — created during and just after the Great Depression conferred enormous benefits on whites while excluding most Southern blacks….

…In the waning days of Jim Crow…public policy….practiced legal segregation….Social Security…excluded maids and farmworkers, the two dominant job categories for Southern blacks and Southwestern Latinos, from the program. This denied benefits to 66 percent of African-Americans across the country, and as much as 89 percent of Southern blacks. It also disproportionately hurt Mexican-Americans….Other New Deal laws… that mandated a 40-hour workweek and a minimum wage…explicitly left out agricultural and domestic workers.

The 1944 G.I. Bill helped white veterans buy homes, attend college, get job training [but] blacks were left out….The law accommodated segregation in higher education….

The National Housing Act of 1934, which insured private mortgages…supported racist covenants and typically denied mortgages to blacks.

This legacy persists. The median household wealth for white families, which consists primarily of equity in housing stands today at $134,230…. but for African-American families it is just $11,030.

The [latest] Justice Department's memo… would once again deploy the power of government and the majesty of law to fortify…the effects of the country's long history of racial oppression.

College degrees don't overcome racism & sexism

NYT, 9/20 — Education is supposed to be the… great socioeconomic leveler….[but] Pay gaps between white and black workers have grown since 1979, even after controlling for education….Discrimination is a leading cause. Last year, black college graduates earned about 21 percent less per hour on average than white college graduates; in 1979, the gap was 13 percent….

Last year, white college-educated women made 31 percent less than white college-educated men, while black college-educated women made 38 percent less than white college-educated men….In black families whose head of household had a college degree, median net worth was recently one-eighth that of comparable white families — $23,400 versus $185,500.

U.S.'s toxic Agent Orange shattered lives of thousands of Vietnamese

NYT, 9/18 — Phan Than Hung Duc, 20, lies immobile and silent….his mouth agape and his chest thrust upward, his hands and feet locked in gnarled deformity. He appears to be frozen in agony. He is one of the thousands of Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange…. A victim of…the United States military effort during the Vietnam War to deprive the "enemy" of cover and food by spraying defoliants….

…Fifty years ago, in 1967, the United States sprayed 5.1 million gallons of herbicides with toxic chemical dioxin across Vietnam, a single-year record for the decade-long campaign to defoliate the countryside. It was done without regard to dioxin's effect on human beings or its virulent and long afterlife…American soldiers were among the unintended victims of this decision. Unwarned, they used the empty 55-gallon drums for makeshift showers….

…Records…indicate that both the military and the chemical companies involved were well aware, early on, of the dangers of dioxin….Unconscionable…is the American government's refusal to acknowledge that Agent Orange has caused the same damage to the Vietnamese as it has to Americans….Only $20 million has been allotted for victims. The…American…excuse is that a definitive connection between Agent Orange and the illnesses has not yet been made. But the evidence is overwhelming: Vietnamese soldiers… with perfectly health children before going to the fight, came home and sired offspring with deformities and horrific illnesses: villages repeatedly sprayed have exceptionally high birth-deformity rates….Given a Vietnamese Red Cross estimate of three million victims, the amount of aid is approximately $12 a year per victim….an inconsequential amount compared to what it cost to produce, transport and deploy the herbicide in the first place. But the legacy of Agent Orange is…about human decency. America created Agent here in a laboratory, shipped it overseas and dumped it with abandon, where it continues to shatter thousands of people's lives.

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION CENTENNIAL SERIES

FREE AT LAST! THE WORLD'S FIRST WORKERS' STATE

This is the first in an extensive series of articles about the Bolshevik Revolution and the triumphs, as well as the defeats, of the world communist movement of the 20th century. We welcome your comments and criticisms.

One hundred years ago, November 7, 1917, marked the beginning of the single most important event of the 20th century, the Bolshevik revolution. Russia's working class, headed by the revolutionary communists of the Bolshevik Party and its leader, Vladimir Lenin, freed one-sixth of the world's surface from capitalism.

The world was changed forever. The rulers were now ruled. Exploiters the world over were trembling.

The Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1848) described why workers were oppressed and told them what to do about it. The Manifesto declared that in making a revolution workers "had only their chains to lose." Seventy years later the Bolshevik Revolution proved that the chains of oppression can be ripped off completely.

The Communist Party was the crucial factor. Its leader, Vladimir Lenin, won it to be totally committed to revolution, not compromise. Under its leadership the workers single-mindedly pursued the goal of state power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The profit system—the dictatorship of the bosses—was destroyed.

Revolution, Not Reform

Some so-called "leftists" advised against revolution. They claimed that the capitalist system could be reformed so that it could better serve the workers.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks would have none of this. They had confidence in the workers! The communists and workers knew from experience that voting and demonstrations wouldn't result in a real change of the social order.

The world's bosses launched a counter-offensive. What was left of the Russian ruling class joined hundreds of thousands of foreign troops from 14 countries, including the United States, that poured into Russia to attempt to "strangle the Bolshevik baby in the cradle" (Winston Churchill).

The fight against this counter-revolution took far longer than the seizure of power. Supported by the vast majority of workers and peasants, the fledgling Red Army triumphed. Foreign soldiers, most of them workers too, did not fight well against them. Workers worldwide rose up to support the first communist workers' revolution.

In a short time, the U.S. troops refused to fight the Red Army and were sent home. Workers all over the U.S acted in many ways to support the Russian revolution.

Why were the Bolsheviks successful?

1. The Russian bourgeois was very weak and poorly organized. The capitalists had only gained power in February 1917. Russian workers saw no essential differences between the Tsar and the capitalists.

2. The Russian working class had been steeled in revolutionary battle. Insurrections had occurred in 1905 and in February 1917, involving many workers in battle, often under Bolshevik leadership. By November 1917 the Bolsheviks were entrenched in key areas in major cities, particularly in communications, the army, and the navy.

3. The Bolsheviks understood they could turn "imperialist war into civil war." The Russian bosses' attention was focused on the European battleground, leaving their internal flank wide open to attack

4. The Bolsheviks had built a worker-peasant alliance, telling the peasants to take all the land from the landowners. This drew all peasants and agricultural workers to revolutionary leadership.

5. Significant portions of the working class and peasantry were won to the key concept of revolutionary violence—without which no revolution can succeed.

6. The Russian working class had the revolutionary leadership of the party of Lenin—the Bolsheviks. They were steeled in battle. They had unbreakable ties to many sections of the working class. They were unswerving in their drive for socialism. They had carried out a protracted political education campaign for nearly 20 years—defeating the misleadership of various pseudo-revolutionary groups.

Achievements

The Soviet system of production was for use, not for profit. In the 1930s, when the entire capitalist world sank into depression, the Soviet Union was building a new society without unemployment and hunger. They created some measure of a decent life for workers in an incredibly short time.

The Soviet Union fought against racism and sexism. The battle against racism was particularly significant. As pro-communist Paul Robeson said about his trips to the Soviet Union, he "felt like a human being for the first time since I grew up."

In 1941, the bosses again tried to destroy the revolution. Hitler, using all of Europe's resources and the largest military machine ever assembled, invaded the Soviet Union. Hitler's prediction of capturing Moscow in six weeks went up in smoke.

All this was accomplished under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. No wonder he is reviled to this day by world capitalism! Now, with the very partial opening of the former Soviet archives and the Trotsky archive, we can see that all the allegations of crimes by Stalin related by pro-capitalist and Trotskyist "historians" are false, without exception.

Lessons to Be Learned

The Bolsheviks were pioneers—the first to try to build socialism and communism. It was inevitable that they would make many mistakes and suffer from many political weaknesses. These ultimately led to the return of capitalism to the USSR.

Today, no country is led by revolutionary communists. But this is a temporary historical setback. We know that "every dark night has its end." Capitalist exploitation and inhumanity inevitably leads workers to fight back.

Progressive Labor Party is a product both of the old International Communist Movement and of the struggle against its revisionism – capitalist ideas dressed up to sound Marxist. Our movement is daily fighting to learn from the Soviet Union's great battles and achievements as well as its deadly errors that led to its collapse. Reformism, racism, nationalism and all forms of concessions to capitalism only lead workers to defeat. We are committed to organizing workers, students and soldiers to build a mass worldwide working class Party that will turn this era of imperialist wars into a new, international communist revolution.✪

Next issue, we will look at the pre-revolutionary period and how the Bolshevik Party was forged in the class struggle.

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